

CHAPTER XI

ENTREY INTO

POLITICS 1832-

1833

«Poetry is the safety valve of my passions, but I wish to act what I write.' Disraeli was not the man to degenerate into a dilettante recluse like Contarini or to waste his life in fanciful dreams of Hebrew conquest after the manner of Alroy. The journey to the East had restored him to health and vigour. He arrived in England 'in famous condition — better indeed than I ever was in my life and full of hope and courage in spite of the overwhelming catastrophe' ; so he wrote to Austen. One of his first acts was to withdraw his name from the books of Lincoln's Inn; he would not even pay the tribute to convention of cloaking his vague ambitions under the dress of an acknowledged profession. His debts were a heavy burden, but he had one tangible asset in his literary reputation. 'Mr. Disraeli, Sir, is come to town — young Mr. Disraeli,' said Colburn to Bulwer. ' Won't he give us a nice light article about his travels?' In his pen Disraeli had a permanent source of income; but during his absence he had developed new ambitions that were more likely to increase expenditure than income. In the East, as health and courage returned, his thoughts had begun to dwell on the attractions of an active political career. Even before he left England Parliament seems to have